97-84037-9

Schwed, Hermine

Confessions of a parlor socialist told by herself

Washington, D.C.

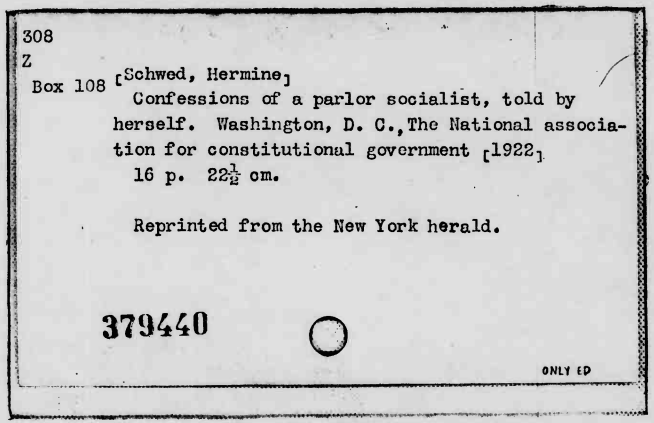
[1922]

97-84037-9
MASTER NEGATIVE #

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
PRESERVATION DIVISION

BIBLIOGRAPHIC MICROFORM TARGET

ORIGINAL MATERIAL AS FILMED - EXISTING BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD


308
Z
Box 108 [Schwed, Hermine]
Confessions of a parlor socialist, told by herself. Washington, D. C., The National association for constitutional government [1922]
16 p. 22½ cm.

Reprinted from the New York herald.

379440

ONLY ED

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: *Reproductions may not be made without permission from Columbia University Libraries.*

TECHNICAL MICROFORM DATA

FILM SIZE: 35 mm REDUCTION RATIO: 10:1 IMAGE PLACEMENT: IA (IIA) IB IIB

DATE FILMED: 3-4-97 INITIALS: PB

TRACKING # : 22353

FILMED BY PRESERVATION RESOURCES, BETHLEHEM, PA.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC IRREGULARITIES

MAIN ENTRY: Schwed, Hermine

Confessions of a parlor socialist told by herself

Bibliographic Irregularities in the Original Document:

List all volumes and pages affected; include name of institution if filming borrowed text.

_____Page(s) missing/not available:_____

_____Volume(s) missing/not available:_____

_____Illegible and/or damaged page(s):_____

_____

_____Page(s) or volume(s) misnumbered:_____

_____Bound out of sequence:_____

_____Page(s) or volume(s) filmed from copy borrowed from:_____

_____

_____Other:_____

_____

X
_____Inserted material: between page [2] & [3]

TRACKING#: MSH22353

Through the President's Office

B2 K

Confessions of a Parlor Socialist

308
Z
Box 108

TOLD
by
HERSELF

The National Association for Constitutional Government
716-717 Colorado Building
Washington, D. C.

PRICE TEN CENTS

Reprinted
by Permission from
THE NEW YORK HERALD.

NOTICE

Washington, D. C.,
March 7, 1922.

To Our Fellow-Members:

The author of the accompanying pamphlet, Miss Hermine Schwed of New York City, has been engaged by the Association as its Field Secretary in charge of the work of organizing and directing study clubs of women who are interested in obtaining a better knowledge of our Federal Constitution and the principles upon which our government is founded.. We are endeavoring in this way to neutralize, to some extent at least, the disintegrating and destructive doctrines being taught and propagated among the people by the socialists and other radicals to the possible overturning of our institutions. Miss Schwed is an effective speaker and has had wide experience in combatting the influences of these avowed enemies of our Government.

Her services are available, for the purposes above-mentioned, without expense except that, owing to the limited funds that can be used for the purpose, it is expected that her necessary traveling expenses will be reimbursed. The Association will try to arrange for meetings to be addressed by Miss Schwed if clubs or societies are interested to invite her. A great deal of good has already been accomplished in this direction which we hope to extend during the coming year.

Please address communications on the subject to the Secretary of the Association, 716 Colorado Building, Washington, D. C.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT

Oct 29, 1923
Pat

CONFESSIONS OF A PARLOR SOCIALIST

By Hermine Schwed.

The Startling Story of the Insidious Methods of Socialist Propagandists—How They Covertly Disparage Religion, Marriage and the Social Relation in Pursuit of Their Unremitting Efforts to Overthrow Our Government and Destroy Modern Civilization—Innocent Idealists Are Their Easy Dupes.

ABOUT twelve years ago, when it had not yet become fashionable to be radical, when, indeed, it took some courage to disregard conservative traditions and display even a tolerant interest toward the wild haired, the unconventional or the Socialists, I met an odd looking Russian Jew named Graefsky, who regarded me with attentive interest.

"Well," he said reflectively, "you are a perfectly new type of American girl to me."

"If it's any comfort to you," I responded, somewhat on guard at being called a girl when I was 30, "you are a perfectly new type to me."

Never had I encountered in my career of "having a good time" as a young girl in the South, as a well chaperoned girl traveling abroad, as a terribly bored young woman in New York city, as a special student at the University of Chicago, or even at various summer and winter resorts as I grew older, such a disarmingly frank, engagingly rude, wholly unconventional and yet somehow infernally clever a little flatterer as this. Graefsky was frank in what he said, but not always in what he implied. And before long I quite forgot to look for the flattery between the lines. Certainly he (and his kind) possessed the art of conversation, added to a keen intuition and an understanding of women that was almost womanish in itself. Presently he brought his chum, Braun, from across

the room to be presented—taller, more presentable and with a delightful sense of humor very rare in the Russian—Jew or Gentile.

Braun in his turn regarded me quizzically, remarking slowly, "Yes, she is different, Lou." He smiled at me. "What shall we do with her now we've found her?"

"Make a good Socialist of her, of course," Graefsky answered crisply.

"Never!" I declared quickly. "You'll never do that."

"What do you know about Socialism that makes you sound so scornful?" asked Braun.

"Oh, well," I began, "it's queer and horrid, and they throw bombs and——"

"Hear, hear!" Graefsky now interrupted. "The lady is mixing us up with Anarchists."

"Just how much do you understand of the real fundamentals of Socialism?" Braun inquired.

I stammered a little. "Why, I'm afraid not very much in a technical sense." The two exchanged a glance.

"Good," smiled Braun. "We'll prove to you that we don't throw bombs, that we have ideals and are working for the good of the masses and the brotherhood of man. You approve of all that!" I nodded eagerly. "Very well, we'll take her in hand, Lou. And we'll begin by showing her some of the real swells among us—real bourgeoisie of the upper rich class like herself." He offered me his arm. "I will present to you that rare bird who is at once a millionaire, an American gentleman and a Socialist. He isn't even a Jew."

"I am of Jewish descent myself," I protested. "And you're mistaken if you think I'm rich. I used to be; but I'm considering going to work now."

"Better and better," murmured Braun, as he and Graefsky piloted me across the room. "We need somebody like you in the cause."

After I had met the Socialist millionaire I had to admit that he looked and talked the part of Braun's "American gentleman"; moreover, he immediately lent great prestige in my eyes to the present gathering of Socialists, whither I had come for the purpose of meeting "some interesting people."

* * *

Thus began my introduction at once to Socialism and its ally of that particular period, bohemianism. Indeed, it was not long before Graefsky and Braun, in order to prove to me

that even anarchism had its idealistic side, took me to the first of a series of lectures by Emma Goldman on the Russian novelists. It was just beginning to be the fashion in those days for uptown folk—rich women and men, teachers, artists of a sort, musicians, settlement workers, etc., to get up parties to hear Emma Goldman. (Who set the fashion is still to be determined!) Gay parties we were, made up of half educated self-satisfied men, women and even girls, who went down to some little hole in Greenwich Village in a high spirit of condescension, seeking merely a new sensation. Some of us, as the weeks went by of the Goldman lectures, gradually came to realize that in this clean skinned, quiet mannered, impassioned woman was a great speaker and a dangerous force. But at this first meeting Emma was too clever to reveal the full meaning of anarchism to her audience of bourgeoisie. No, what we got was largely between the line stuff, small hypodermic doses of the anarchistic virus, so tiny that we scarcely realized that we were getting them at all.

As the lectures continued we were being made just familiar enough with certain Russian novelists of the socialist and anarchist school to have a bowing acquaintance with not only their characters but with certain high sounding theories which these so often held—perhaps it was the beauty of free love, or the stupidity of any laws whatever for the superman, or the fallacy of religion. Most of us in our desire to be intellectual and up to date did not go so far as actually to read the books in question, for we gathered enough at the Goldman lectures to refer intelligently to them afterward. We could even quote a little clever stuff from Tolstoy, Turgenieff, Andrief, Gorky and the rest. But "Sanine"—that little history of murder, lust and bestiality by Arzibasheff—being the book of the hour that winter and almost required reading, we all chewed and digested it thoroughly. And gradually a tolerance for the doctrines of free love, atheism and even a certain decadence seemed to denote that one was broad and "big." I remember some of my family and friends lifting up their hands (and eyebrows) at some of my "free ideas." My brother, for instance, when I confided to him what a wonderful woman Emma Goldman was, inquired pleasantly:

"Do you stand for her programme?"

And when I replied from secure Olympian heights, "No, but I can see her point of view and respect it," I considered him extremely narrow minded when he remarked amusedly:

"Look out that you're not on the road to anarchism yourself, if you tolerate it."

Another time I heard him telling somebody with a laugh that his proper sister was consorting with the latest thing in fashions—the anarchists—and that every time he heard of one of the gentry being arrested he trembled for fear a sympathetic letter from me should be found in the bosom of the bomber! But I would not be swerved by ridicule or even scorn; for one of the things which the Graefsky-Braun school emphasized was that a truly free spirit would courageously continue in the search for truth in spite of family opposition or even adverse public opinion. One must be brave!

* * *

The two men took me about everywhere that year, sometimes singly, sometimes together, and still again with one of the hybrid parties—to all of the Goldman series of lectures, to see Mimi Agulia, the wild Sicilian actress; to the Liberal Club and finally to the Harvey salon. Hal Harvey, a well to do American painter who had married a Russian and turned Socialist, lived that year in a charming old house near Washington Square; and he kept the latchstring out for his comrades in a practical way. For we all knew that the big brass key to the front door was always in the depths of the mail box when Hal and Manya Harvey were out. We were at liberty to go into the beautiful library, stretch out on the couch to smoke, or read any one of the many books on the shelves. (It was only when some of the most valuable of these began to disappear that the key was no longer put into the box.)

The evening parties which the Harveys gave, though small and select, were very charming, indeed. There in front of the log fire one was likely to meet radicals, near radicals and even radically inclined conservatives—plain Socialists, guild Socialists, Anarchists and Syndicalists, with their following of little literary persons, art students and the inevitable fashionables. At Harvey's the talk was good, the fun moderate and the propaganda withheld—at least it didn't stick out in the least. But I think perhaps more converts were made afterward through acquaintances made here than through any more deliberate attempt at conversion.

* * *

As time went on, though I was taken about by others of the Harvey set, it got to be generally understood that Graefsky and Braun considered me their special protegee, and there was some good natured bantering as to which of the two was the favored one. I really liked them both, but my main feeling was an intense desire to learn everything they might teach me, or—as one or the other put it—I was "like a big, insistent question mark."

It was this way: If what I had always considered black was white, and white black, well then I had to understand precisely why. And when those new friends were unable to explain satisfactorily I remained unconvinced. As I remember, Graefsky made love to me a little, in a sort of a philandering, uninspired way; and Braun (always by far the keener of the two) made his appeal through my idealism. Once when I inquired why they were so nice to a little old maid who wasn't a bit pretty, Braun chuckled and answered with characteristic frankness that they wanted to make me one of them principally because I had a convincing way with me and had a big following.

"If we succeed in getting you we'll probably get all your friends and family," he added.

On the whole my immediate family, following the example of my brother, was perfectly good natured about my radical friends, inviting them to dinner now and then and listening absent mindedly to their views. But they (the family) made me furious by refusing laughingly to accompany me to the meetings of the radicals or to read their books, maintaining that their olfactory nerves were too sensitive for both. Many of my old friends, however, not being so finicky, attended the meetings, read the books, made friends with the radicals and, in some instances, caused me no little uneasiness—at the time and since (especially since)—by actually joining the ranks of the Socialist party.

For let it be said at once that I myself was never converted wholly to what I understood Socialism to be. Though I learned many beguiling things about that philosophy in the course of time—that Socialism meant a square deal to everybody, especially the poor workingman; that the super-rich were to be less rich and the poor less poor; that the only true socialism was the brotherhood of man, this to be brought about by evolution (but that one must not be too hard on the impatient left-wingers and their programme of violence)—in spite of all these and more humanitarian measures held out, still I hung back from committing myself.

Somehow, though the talk was fair and the Wells-Bertrand Russell-Zueblin variety of Socialist propaganda given me to read, pleasantly sugar coated, still I held aloof. For one thing, as I grew to know some of the radicals better I felt more and more that I didn't really "belong." I suspected this in spite of the fact that, as I have said, I honestly did not criticise them for their disbelief in marriage, family life or religion. I was even willing to grant that they were "big" and that I was "small." (To be "big" was the great ambition in those days, even as it is now.)

At one stage of the game I was rather sorry to be small; but the thing seemed to be a matter of fate—inevitable! And finally I became resigned. In retrospect I can see that this was partly because I was constantly differing from Braun and Graefsky in certain fundamentals. But what may have made me really immune (not to take too much credit to myself) was a little matter of having been all the while in love with an unpoetic, practical man of affairs who regarded all radicals as mere "nuts."

* * *

One spring day Graefsky and Braun were taking me to Carnegie Hall to hear Eugene Debs, discussing on the way his probable exciting effect on such a high-strung, sensitive nature as mine. As we entered the crowded place, certainly I was all keyed up. But afterward, as we three sat on a bench in the park, I found myself curiously let down and saying defensively, "But he seems like a big, excited, violent child. He's not even logical. He's almost pathetic."

Graefsky threw up his hands in disgust and said, "Bourgeois to the core! I give you up." I was genuinely sorry.

"But not at all" smiled Braun. "I hold on to you tight. You may not be a full fledged Socialist, but you are a Socialist sympathizer. Now, aren't you?"

"Of course I am," I declared eagerly. "Haven't I shown that? Don't I always fight your battles with the narrow minded? Don't I like lots of things about Socialism even though I don't join the party?"

"She'll do! She'll do!" Braun cried. "Don't be a donkey, Lou."

Thus I achieved my title of Socialist sympathizer—better known to-day as Parlor Socialist—and Lou, brightening up, began to discuss the Oriental rhythm of "The Love Lyrics of India."

Here, if anybody should ask, "But how could you influence people toward a movement of which you, yourself understood so little?" I could only answer that what I did understand of Socialism (the shorter working hours, higher wages, better working conditions, etc., which I now recognize as mere "trimmings," likely to attract all right minded persons)—those seemed to me the backbone of the entire philosophy.

Certainly nothing in the Wells-Zueblin books of the period made me doubt that the Socialist, brotherhood of man goal was to be reached altogether through these and other reform measures. And even though I had looked through the socalled Bible of the Socialists—The Communist Manifesto, written by Marx and Engels in 1848—nobody encouraged me to study the somewhat involved style or the unfamiliar words and phrases which Socialist literature affects. If, for example, I read in the Manifesto that the Socialist state expected to "expropriate" private property, I took for granted that if they proposed confiscation they naturally also planned reimbursement. Once when Graefsky saw the little pamphlet in my hands he said doubtfully to Braun:

"Is she ready for the Manifesto?"

Braun chuckled. "Oh, let her have it. She won't necessarily read through the dull stuff anyway. She takes us on faith. She won't join us, but she's working for us just the same."

Clever Braun! How right he was even in his frankness I can see now. Of course, if I had indeed studied the Manifesto (which indulges in some unusually definite statements) I should have experienced a little revolution of my own. As it was, if any one had told me that the "Socialist Bible" advocated the confiscation of all private property—without any remuneration—and the gradual overthrow by violence of all capitalistic governments, including our own—I should surely have laughed. As Braun had said, I took my people on faith!

* * *

Well, then, on the compromise plank of a Socialist sympathizer I drifted on for some years, even after something happened to make me doubt the personal sincerity of my Socialist guides. This came about through Sarah Blank, the olive skinned, smooth haired serpentine young Russian, whom I had met through them. From the first I had felt somewhat repelled by Sarah, but forgot this in my admiration for her cleverness and a certain high courage which she had.

Candor was Sarah's habit, and she was fond of boasting that not alone did she believe in free love, but meant to live up to her belief whenever she really fell in love. "What is the mere marriage ceremony?" she would ask, with her lazy smile and a twist of her lazy body from the depths of the couch cushions of the bare little flat, which was, nevertheless, charming. "If I met a married man who, I felt, was the one love of my life (and love is the greatest hunger in the world) do you suppose I would let a stupid bourgeois marriage ceremony stand in my way? Bah! No!"

"Do you mean that you'll be his—his——" I stammered over the word.

"Mistress? Why yes, little Miss Question Mark, that's what I do mean. Only I should be frank about it, for I should be his true wife. What is there to be ashamed of in the honest desire of a woman and a man for each other? No underhand stuff for me!" She settled back in the cushions and lit a cigarette.

Here at last was something like the book heroines! I was full of admiration for this magnificent honesty. And when a very famous Russian Yiddish actor, on a visit to this country, appeared at Sarah's flat to smoke cigarettes, pose and hold his court there, it soon became evident that his wife at home was not to interfere with any admiration which he felt for Sarah. I watched the little drama with breathless interest. If, indeed, she did go to him as her one great love, would it be done openly as she had boasted and as Braun and Graefsky would strongly approve? Had they not often told me how noble a woman was who gave herself frankly and openly to her lover, disregarding narrow convention, scorning any loss of caste? Even without their preaching I could see a certain noble courage in such a woman.

Well, Sarah did go to him and altogether openly at that. I had just had the news from her in a little note which said that I was the first person to be told, but to-morrow every one would know, when I dashed off to an evening party at the Harvey's. Here Braun had a perfectly new foreign lion in tow, and Graefsky was looking after me. Presently some one casually mentioned Sarah's name. At the moment I happened to be looking at Braun and saw him glance significantly and sneeringly at my companion. Clearly they also knew about Sarah. Graefsky frankly leered. Something seemed to be the matter near the pit of my stomach. But then I flared with

indignation. They had been pretending! For each expression said as plain as spoken words, "She has lost caste."

So it was in a mere exchange of glances that I found my poseurs out, and I am afraid I took it rather hard. We never discussed Sarah's nobility or mentioned her in any way. But from that moment I lost faith in the personal sincerity of Braun and Graefsky, seeing less and less of them. After this I was fond of saying, "I like Socialism well enough, but I don't care for the Socialists." This witticism usually brought a laugh, and I thought I had invented it. Since then I have often heard it spoken by other similarly deluded fools.

One day Braun confided to me, "You don't like any of us as much as you used to, and some day I'll find out why." I didn't have the courage to refer to the mere interchange of smiles and ventured, "Why, I've found out that you are all a lot of irresponsibles."

"Is that all? That's an old story," Braun smiled. "You'll have to get used to us. We don't like to grow up. That's all."

But I had now lost faith! And I had a legitimate excuse to stop seeing my radical friends in some settlement work which carried me into a field which neither man could as a Socialist approve. "Sentimental stuff!" cried Graefsky.

"Mere patchwork!" said Braun.

Since, however, what they said no longer influenced me, I threw myself whole heartedly into that and similar work for the next five years, during which time I saw nothing whatever of either man. If at the end of the period I came to agree partly with them that settlement work is largely futile, this was on very different grounds from their own. In other words, if I do not believe in ignorant idealists trying to Americanize the alien of today, this is because of the fact that though the average immigrant is not a radical, he is soon made so by the clever work of the agitators already here, whose main interest is precisely to overthrow the Constitution and Government of the United States. Further, since the young settlement crusaders are often turned out of college altogether tolerant of Socialism, they as often become entirely converted through certain foreigners coming to the house—usually shrewd and highly educated Socialist propagandists. Accordingly, instead of the alien being Americanized, our social workers are commonly alienated from Americanism. The solution, of course, would be for the young American to be turned out of college

better educated, both as to his own form of Government and that proposed by the radicals who would destroy it.

This, however, is a digression, and I must return to my story, which, after some five years, brings me presently to the last lap of my activities along the lines of social work—the spring of 1917. In the meantime the war had broken out in Europe, and though I saw very little of my radical friends, yet when I did meet them I found myself less and less in sympathy with their so-called modernity. For Braun, after mocking at and reviling marriage, had quietly married a girl he loved. Graefsky had made money through a business venture and emerged a capitalist. And Sarah, the single minded, had tired of her actor and had already lived with two other men. No wonder I firmly announced myself as old fashioned. No wonder I listened unmoved to the arguments against patriotism, against preparedness, for immediate peace, a neutral conference and the rest of those strange cries of 1914-1917 so often on the lips of the radicals! But though I had indeed lost faith in their modern theories, yet I still had confidence in what I liked to call the religion of the Socialists—that is, I had confidence in their sincere endeavor to make the world a better place through a humanitarian programme.

Once we were in the war it was not long before I found something to do connected with it—first, as secretary for volunteers of Mayor Mitchell's Committee on National Defence and later as secretary of the speakers' bureau of a patriotic organization. Once more I was closely associated with Socialists, largely with those who had left the party on account of its war platform and who offered their services in the allied cause. A few of these I had run across before, but most of the charming foreign men—Greeks, Rumanians, Armenians, Australians, New Zealanders, Italians and even two Germans (supposedly converted)—were strangers to me. By the time that I got to the National Speakers' Bureau I was so well acquainted with the talents of the foreigners in question that the director of the speakers' bureau put me in charge of this group. And thereby hangs my tale.

It had seemed wise in those days to choose a reconverted Socialist to go down to the great Socialist centres in order to reconcile the young men to the draft, and then to put the fire of patriotism into their hearts. Indeed, I had lately seen this miracle happen when I had accompanied—let us call him Fred Reynolds, an old acquaintance and a former Socialist, who had

turned patriot—as he filled one of these difficult assignments. What a ringing denunciation of the Germans he gave! What a stirring account of his own conversion! And what magnificent enthusiasm he wrung from his audience! I was so happy that I at once gave Reynolds another assignment of the same nature for the next week. And it was altogether by accident that I happened upon him speaking at a Socialist meeting of which I knew nothing the very next day. It was even partly accidental that I refrained from letting him know that I was in his audience. For I had come in late, and as I observed the sea of eager, swarthy, discontented faces about me I thought it as well to remain where I was.

It was well indeed! For here at last I found out what had so long eluded me, the true meaning of Socialism! In that clever, guarded speech, keeping carefully within the letter of the law, making the most of his points between the lines, the speaker made the truth about Socialism fairly stick out. It seemed that he had resigned from the party not because he did not believe in the overthrow of our capitalistic Government, not because he did not believe in the Socialists confiscating all private property (as their right), or in the dictatorship of the proletariat or in the disarming of the bourgeoisie! Not at all! Thanks to my familiarity with the catch phrases of Socialism (imperfect as this was) I gathered that the speaker merely didn't consider the time ripe or even propitious for a revolution. He suggested putting off the great moment to-day, but only because it could be successfully achieved to-morrow. He inferred that it would be wise to accept the draft, help the allies destroy the German capitalists, thus gaining the confidence of patriots here; and then, after the war was over, work all the more successfully for the revolution.

At last I could boast of understanding the very philosophy of Socialism! A certain paragraph of "The Communist Manifesto" (P. 33) which I had once accepted in a purely Pickwickian sense, now sprang into my mind:

"In one word, you reproach us with intending to do away with your property. Precisely so; that is just what we intend."

How was it, I asked myself, that I could not have grasped before the crystal clearness of these words? At this distance I could only surmise that in the old days my mind had been so confused by hearing so much of "all sides of the question" (as well as by the lack of any serious study) that I was incapable of any clear judgment.

From that time on, however, I have made up for my previous

failure to study. I know "The Communist Manifesto" and even the Socialist constitution of to-day so well that I can see for myself that Socialism carried to its logical conclusion must always end in what some call Bolshevism and others Communism. I even maintain that the master minds among the Socialists, knowing that the scheme must inevitably end in chaos, are merely working to get the power of life and death here as they have in Russia. And if I am still fighting the Socialists to-day—both the outspoken and the disguised variety—whenever and wherever I can, this is because I see that they have already succeeded in undermining the confidence of some of our people in the Constitution of the United States.

The Constitution of the United States! In the old days I understoood almost as little of its workings as the Socialist constitution. But nowadays I have not even confined myself to the study of the forces determined to destroy our Government. To-day I know our own constitution well enough to realize what true liberty it represents; to correct many false statements made concerning it, and to defend it generally against attack.

* * *

Last winter I ran across Graefsky, who, though very prosperous these days, still calls himself a Socialist, giving divers weak reasons for holding on to and profiting by his accumulated wealth. He hailed me blithely and inquired when I would go to an interesting meeting with him. I answered that I had done with Socialist meetings and Socialism long ago, upon which he urged that this was not a Socialist but a free speech meeting.

"Now, now, Graefsky," I smiled, "I know better than that nowadays. I've made a study of many forms of your camouflage, even of the free speech variety." I paused. "It's very clever of you people to invoke one part of our Constitution—the Freedom of Speech clause—so you may be allowed to try to destroy the rest."

"What else does the wise lady know?" he inquired.

"Well, that the Socialists are planning to fool the bourgeoisie in this country into helping the revolutionary cause, just as they did in the Russian and the French revolutions. And I know that the Socialist program of 'the proletariat ruling the earth' is merely a political trick to capture the vote of the working people and put the Socialist leaders in power. I am a working woman myself these days and naturally a better friend than ever of the masses." He raised his eyebrows. "And I've read

'The Communist Manifesto' thoroughly at last." He laughed. "And I've studied the N. Y. State Report on 'Revolutionary Radicalism'; and I've read Boris Brasol's 'Socialism vs. Civilization. Also I'm a diligent reader of *The Call*. And I've even paid some visits to the Rand School lectures."

At this Graefsky's manner changed entirely. "Well, and what do you propose to do about Socialism since you've decided that you really don't fancy it?"

"Wake other people up! Point out for instance that since Lenine has lately announced a 'partial return to capitalism', Socialism is clearly a false and rotten philosophy." He shook his head, smiling. "I'll show other people how necessary it is to study," I insisted.

He laughed again. "And does the wise lady really imagine she can persuade the average American woman to study?" I nodded. "Don't you suppose we've made a study of her ourselves? You were one of our subjects. Did you study in the old days?"

I winced but managed to smile. "That's why I am determined to spare other women of my kind the unhappiness of having helped a bad cause merely through a little mental laziness. The trouble with me was that whatever studying I did was under you Socialists. I'll warn against that method."

"I shouldn't advise your warning them at all," said the Russian. "They will merely call you a victim of mob hysteria or else a fanatic. And certainly the Americans will never study. I'll stake my reputation as a prophet on it."

I considered. "But you were careful to keep me confused. Our people are waking up."

Graefsky laughed. "We are also keeping them confused. Remember," he added politely, "I have predicted it. They will never study. You yourself are by nature an optimist."

"Oh, I don't know," I said as I turned to leave him. "Let me see: The Women's City Club of New York, the Massachusetts Public Interests League, the Constitutional Leagues of Wellesley, Milton and Cambridge and eight other Women's Clubs are studying."

* * *

Since then many forces have combined fortuitously to awaken the people of this country to the perils of Socialism.

Vice-President Coolidge has given solemn warning to the mothers of college students. Soviet Russia, collapsing in a famine due mainly to the colossal failure of Socialism itself in

action, continues to use the much reviled capitalistic system, for the moment at least. And certain former Socialists have returned from Russia thoroughly cured of Socialism. There are still, however, all too many perfectly well meaning American idealists, confused, deceived, or greatly misinformed, who insist, in the name of humanity, in furthering the cause either of Socialism unabashed or else of Socialism disguised. They cannot even see that while we are feeding Soviet Russia the agents of Soviet Russia in this country, paid by the Third Internationale, continue steadily to agitate for a revolution here, eager to devour the hand that feeds them.

How many of us realize that our whole country is infested with eloquent speakers who on the one hand are inflaming huge audiences of working people to a Socialist revolution and on the other roundly cursing out Socialism under that name to huge audiences of the employing class, confusing or soothing them as to the likelihood of any revolutionary danger whatever? And inserted between the lines—under one camouflage or another—is some very carefully prepared and effective Socialist propaganda!

It makes a former Parlor Socialist smile a little—on the wrong side of her mouth.

MSH #22353

END OF
TITLE